

Minutes of Meeting
State Soil Conservation Board
Indiana Government Center, Conference Room 1
402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Present:

David L. Avery
Ellsworth P. Christmas
Karen L. Dehne
Paul J. Ehret
Peter A. Hippensteel
O. William Mann
Garry Tom
Julia B. Wickard

Absent:

Travis E. Nolcox

Others present:

Randy J. Braun
Sherman Bryant
Douglas Campbell
Dorothy A. Corns
Gary D. Doxtater
Jim Druin
Robert L. Eddleman
Jill E. Hoffmann
James M. Krejci
Michael E. Massonne

Harry S. Nikides
James K. Ray
J. Chris Tippie
Gwen M. White

Chairman Peter Hippensteel brought the meeting to order at 9:27 a.m. SWCD Foundation member Robert Eddleman advised that he would have a report of foundation activities.

Draft Minutes of December 10, 2002

Ellsworth Christmas moved to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by David Avery and carried.

Clean Water Indiana

Division director Harry Nikides advised that Steuben SWCD sent a request to revise their Clean Water Indiana project to include eligibility for filter strips on cropland and to increase the amount of the incentive payment. The district's original request provided for eligibility only on non-cropland. The revision is consistent with other previously approved Clean Water Indiana projects.

Paul Ehret moved to approve Steuben SWCD's request for Clean Water Indiana revision. The motion was seconded by Garry Tom and carried.

Soil and Water Quality Programs

Education and SWCD Support:

Conservation program coordinator Jim Krejci reported that interviews for the southeastern Indiana conservation program specialist are scheduled for January 24.

A staff member is scheduled to attend each of the 92 SWCD annual meetings. Other on-going activities include working with districts to develop local motion and business plan processes.

Stormwater and Sediment Control:

Program chief Randy Braun distributed copies of the draft special project fund policy for establishing distribution of the Division's share of Rule 5 fees and penalties revenue. The draft includes a listing of eligible projects and a sample application form. Applications would be evaluated by a committee and recommended to the State Soil Conservation Board, in a manner similar to the Clean Water Indiana application and grant process. Approximately \$170,000 is available in the current fiscal year for distribution to districts or for Division special projects.

Ellsworth Christmas moved to approve the special project fund policy with a per project cap of \$20,000. The motion was seconded by David Avery and carried.

Agricultural Assistance:

Land and water conservation program chief Jim Ray advised that considerable progress has been made in utilizing funding provided through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for erosion control and nutrient management projects that improve water quality affected by confined feeding operations. The program has been functioning since September 2000, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Indiana Association of SWCDs, IDEM, and the Division. Staff is anticipating a tentative June 1, 2002, deadline to the program. Ray distributed a listing of types of projects that have been carried out by producers and the amount of money spent to date.

Lake and River Enhancement:

Division biologist Jill Hoffmann presented a report on consultant selection for the Smalley Lake watershed diagnostic study (Noble County). The Tippecanoe Environmental Lake and Watershed Foundation is the project sponsor. Three of five consultants submitting proposals were invited to interview, with J.F. New & Associates selected to carry out the study. Total project budget is \$32,960, with \$30,600 requested in LARE funding. Staff recommends acceptance of the consultant selection.

David Avery moved to accept staff recommendation for consultant selection for the Smalley Lake watershed diagnostic study. The motion was seconded by Julia Wickard and carried.

Hoffmann presented a report on consultant selection for the Mississinewa River watershed diagnostic study, phase 2 (Randolph, Delaware and Jay counties). This study would evaluate the middle section of the very large watershed, which has been divided into three phases for ease of study. Delaware SWCD would serve as lead district. A steering committee, comprised of supervisors and citizens from each district, interviewed three consultants from the seven

submitting proposals and selected Commonwealth Biomonitoring, with a project budget of \$36,000. Staff recommends acceptance of the consultant selection.

Garry Tom moved to accept staff recommendation for consultant selection for the Mississinewa River watershed diagnostic study. The motion was seconded by Paul Ehret and carried.

Jim Ray presented a report on consultant selection for design of the Juday Creek stream channel reconstruction project (St. Joseph County). The project sponsor, St. Joseph County Drainage Board, heard two consultant proposals and selected DLZ Indiana, LLC, and Confluence Consulting, Inc., to perform the work. Project cost is estimated at \$47,840, with a maximum of 90 percent requested in LARE funding. A LARE-funded engineering feasibility study outlined several actions for ecological restoration of the creek, including some actions that will be addressed by the design study. Staff recommends acceptance of the consultant selection.

Ellsworth Christmas moved to accept staff recommendation for the consultant selection for the Juday Creek design study. The motion was seconded by Julia Wickard and carried.

Jill Hoffman presented the completion report for the Chain O' Lakes watershed diagnostic study (Noble County). The State Board approved \$27,000 in LARE funding in July 1998 for the study, with the Noble SWCD serving as project sponsor. The 12,700-acre watershed includes the Chain O' Lakes State Park, which covers 2,600 acres. Working with Gensic & Associates, the district field checked and mapped all acreage within the watershed for land use. Problems were identified as: agricultural erosion on erodible land adjacent to open drainage channels, faulty land and livestock management practices, and degraded biological communities. Recommendations include vegetative filter strips, grassed waterways and rock chutes, livestock exclusion, and streambank protection. A balance of \$4,050 remains to be paid on the project. Staff recommends final payment and acceptance of the Chain O' Lakes study.

Ellsworth Christmas moved to accept staff recommendation for completion of the Chain O' Lakes watershed diagnostic study and to make final payment to the Noble SWCD. The motion was seconded by Julia Wickard and carried.

District Issues and Updates

A second audit of the Porter SWCD financial records is currently underway.

Chairman's Report

Pete Hippensteel complimented the partnership for developing and carrying out the annual conference and Jim Ray for his selection as wetlands specialist for the DNR.

Hippensteel discussed two land development projects currently being planned in Steuben County that will likely have potential impacts on Crooked Lake and Jimmerson Lake. A planned

housing development on Hamilton Lake also appears to have similar potential impacts on the lake and adjacent wetlands.

Division of Soil Conservation Director's Report

Harry Nikides distributed copies of an e-newsletter entitled "Hoosier Wetlands." DNR Director John Goss is encouraging statewide distribution of the newsletter to all having interest in wetlands and natural resources protection.

Interviews are being scheduled to fill the administrative assistant 4 position in the Indianapolis office. Approximately 130 applications have been received for the six vacant resource specialist positions; applications are being screen for selection of qualified candidates for interview.

Management staff continues to evaluate workloads to determine how best to fill the vacant engineer and agriculture conservation specialist positons.

DNR divisions of Forestry, Fish & Wildlife, and Soil Conservation are working with NRCS staff to coordinate natural resources activities relative to the Farm Bill.

IDEM Report

Senior environmental manager Doug Campbell reported that IDEM has forwarded its recommendations for Section 319 grants to EPA. EPA's approvals will be announced as soon as results become available.

The application deadline for Section 104b3 and 205j grants is January 31. Each program will provide \$300,000 in grants.

State Association President's Report

Vice president Sherman Bryant reviewed recent State Association activities, including legislative initiatives and the annual conference program. The Association will continue working on its business plan at its January 23 meeting. The next full board of directors' meeting will be Wednesday, March 5. Hiring a public relations coordinator has been delayed for the present. Association member Bob Eddleman discussed current status and sponsorship of pending legislation affecting the Association and districts.

NRCS State Conservationist's Report

Assistant state conservationist Chris Tippie distributed copies of the "2002 Indiana Report" of NRCS activities. Tippie noted that the proposed EQIP program rules will be published on January 24, which is followed by a 60-day review period. County EQIP rankings are now being received and reviewed. The NRCS Chief has issued a moratorium on staffing and major expenditures through January 31; other budget issues are also currently under review. The conservation partnership is cooperating with the Indiana Land Improvement Contractors Association to provide staff training.

Public Comment

Bob Eddleman provided an activity report on behalf of the SWCD Foundation, discussing how tree sales programs have benefited participating districts.

Next Meeting

The next State Soil Conservation Board meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, 2003, in the Government Conference Center, Indianapolis.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Dorothy Corns

Approved February 11, 2003:

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